Numb. 8

# The Female Tatler.

*Written by a Society of* Ladies.

*Hæc a Fœminea vidimus acta Manu.*

3024

From Wednesday January 25, to Friday January 27, 1710.

## Artesia's Day.

WHEN we shall have finish'd our Table of *Fame*, I doubt the Male-Criticks will have abundance to object against it, not that we want Numbers of Famous Women in History, but they'll pretend that we have none Eminent enough to Cope with the Men of the first Rank; they'll tell us, that what we can brag of in our own Sex, consists chiefly in particular Actions and single Instances of Virtue, but that we can shew but few Women whose Lives were made up of a Series of Heroick Deeds, as those of *Alexander*, *Cæsar*, and many others, which the Men can produce. As I foresee this objection, so I shall take care that those of my Sex may have an Answer ready whenever it shall be made: First, it is to be consider'd, that Virtues are never more Conspicuous than in great Persons, and therefore in the Male Table none are admitted among the Heroes of the first Rank, but Mighty Kings, Emperors, and such as have attained to a Superlative Power: Secondly, we must mind that the Writing of History has been all along engross'd by the Men, of which the most Cunning have always been so careful to pick out the most remarkable Subjects, never endeavouring to render any Name Immortal, whose Greatness was not able to perpetuate their Own. From what I have said it is evident, that the Women, unless they had enjoy'd an equal Share of Power and Greatness with the Men, will not be found upon Record for their Excellencies so much as the latter, tho' they had exceeded them in every Virtue. Since Men have enslav'd us, the greatest part of the World have always debar'd our Sex from Governing, which is the Reason that the Lives of Women have so seldom been describ'd in History; but as this is only to be imputed to the Injustice and Tyranny of the Men, so it ought not to be of any Disadvantage to the Women. When *Scipio* had taken *Carthage*, and *Asdrubal* been contented with Capitulating for no Body's Life but his Own, the Moors Courageous Wife having upbraided him with Impiety and meaness of Soul, leap'd with her Children into the Flames of her perishing Country. Had this Woman's Fortitude been tried on any other Occasion, there is no reason to think but that it would have been the same. The *Roman Clelia* might have Commanded an Army as long as *Alexander*, and not had occasion of shewing greater Intrepidity than she did when she threw herself into the rapid Streams of the *Tiber*. If Women had been at Helm as often as the Men, the first would far outshine the latter. Another objection will be, that Patience, Chastity, Conjugal Love, and other Female Virtues, are not so valuable as the Magnanimity, Courage, or any of the Heroick Qualities, by which Men have made themselves Famous: To this I answer, that the highest Degrees of Virtues are all the same. When we so firmly adhere to any one as to chuse Death rather than forfeit it, we are advanc'd to the top of it, and our Virtue is Heroick. She that is kill'd in Defence of her Chastity, is as Brave as he that Dies in fighting for his Country; besides, that it is with Virtues as it is with Beauties, some become the Men and others the Women most.

I am of my Sister's Opinion, that to our Sex there is no Virtue nor good Quality more valuable than Chastity: I likewise believe, that the Aspersions that are thrown upon the *Roman Lucretia*, for dying after the Fact was committed, are malicious, tho' I think the famous Marchioness of *Obezzi*, of whom the Gentleman spoke in my Sister's last, has out-done her by preserving what she died for: Some perhaps will say, that none ought to appear at the Table of *Fame*, that have not been Dead a Hundred Years, and consequently that the Virtuous *Susanna* should not be mentioned here. I have not tied my self to a Hundred Years, but if she be excepted against, there's yet another for the same Reason preferable to *Lucretia*. The *Grecian Hippo*, who being taken by the Enemies Fleet, threw her self into the Sea, that by her Death she might prevent her dishonour.

These Women were Patterns of Chastity, and Virtuous to the highest degree, and I will own that there cannot be any one Virtue more deserving in our Sex; yet I am far from thinking that any of them ought to be placed at the upper end of the Table of *Fame*, that Honour must be reserved for a greater She, in whom Consummate Wildom, Fortitude and Clemency, were join'd to all the Female Virtues: One, who for Forty Years held the Ballance and withstood the greatest Force of *Europe*; by what I have said it is plain, that I can mean no other but an *English* Queen.—— Yes, of all onr Sex the famous *Elizabeth* has made the greatest Figure, if we consider all the Plots and Conspiracies against her at Home as well as the Crafty Designs of the Popish Priests Abroad, she must have been a Miracle of Politicks to discover and baffle all the Artifices that were play'd at her as she did. In Clemency, Princely Goodness, and Motherly Care for all her Subjects, she was not exceeded even by *Augustus*. Such was her Courage and Resolution in the War with the vast Monarchy of *Spain*, that *Cæsar* himself could not have expected with greater Intrepidity the (then call'd) Invincible *Armada* than this Heroick Queen. The more I look into her glorious Reign, and all her Actions

ons; the more I am forced to think, that the first Place among her Sex is less to be disputed to her, than among his it is to *Alexander*.

*England* is a Populous plentiful Country, a Nation Rich and Warlike, and the Monarchs of it Interior to none in *Europe*; but among Kings, the Dignities and Preheminence of one above the other are disputable, *France* and *Spain* Quarrel about it, *England* yields it to neither, and the Emperor claims it of all: But there being divers Monarchs in other Parts of the World, that think themselves far above any of the *European* Princes, it is very difficult to decide among the Men, which is at any time the greatest Monarch. Among our Sex when *England* is blest'd with a Queen, and at the same time *Spain* ruled by a King, the matter is soon determined, and She that governs this Isle, is without dispute, by many Degrees, the greatest of her Sex in all the Universe. To Twenty Kings and Emperors living at the same time the Compliment is made, that they are the greatest Princes upon Earth, which shews to each the Vanity of the Title he has to it; but that a Regent Queen of *England*, when *Spain* has none, is the first Woman in the World, is a truth which even our Enemies cannot contradict, and consequently may be said without the least suspicion of Flattery. If what I have premised of the Personal Qualities of Queen *Elizabeth*, you please to add to what I said last, concerning the Rank she held in the World, I hope you'll agree, that at our Table of *Fame* I cou'd not without Injustice have given the highest Place to any other.

Speaking of this I can but wonder, that in a Nation detesting the Tyranny of the Salique Law, all Women that are not Born to be Sovereigns should be made Slaves so much more than in other Countries. Why should we be treated almost as if we were Irrational Creatures: We are industriously kept from the Knowledge of Arts and Sciences, if we talk Politicks we are laugh'd at; to understand Latin is petty Treason in us; silence is recommended to us a necessary Duty, and the greatest Encomium a Man can give his Wife is to tell the World that she is Obedient: The Men like wary Conquerors, keep us Ignorant, because they are afraid of us, and that they may the easier maintain their Dominion over us, they Compliment us into Idleness, pretending those Peasants to be the Tokens of their Affection, which in reality are the Consequences of their Tyranny; But what enrages me most is to see our Sex so stupid as to believe themselves better treated than the Women in other Nations, because we are more egregiously Cheated of our Right and Liberties than they; a Man is call'd Prudent for not trusting any thing of Moment to his Wife, and makes her believe, that to be his Co-partner in the Management of his Estate, would be an insufferable Trouble to her; while by his Neglect, Folly or Extravagancy, she is often made a Beggar at the same time when she thinks herself a Wealthy Woman.

How can People in their Senses think, that the fine Cloaths and all the Trinkets that are given us, are bestow'd upon the Sex any other ways than Play Things are given to Children to amuse, keep their Thoughts employ'd, and their Hands from doing of Mischief? Does any body believe, that Rich Men are at the Charge of sumtuous Liveries because they love their Servants, or bestow fine Harnesses upon their Coach Horses, because they value them.

†‡† *This is to give notice to the* Colchester-Dutchman *and others, whom it may concern, That the Society of Tatling Lady's will no more be troubled with any Questions, tho' never so Lawful, as long as there are two such Eminent Oracles of equal Infallibility, that are always ready to resolve them; The* British-Apollo, *and Dr.* Trotter; *The one deriving his from the Stars, as the other do theirs from the Sun.*


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